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Recommended Findings

**PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING JANUARY 17, 2018
RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

**VINE CLIFF WINERY MAJOR MODIFICATION
USE PERMIT MAJOR MODIFICATION #P17-00129-MOD
7400 SILVERADO TRAIL, NAPA, 94558
APN 032-030-027**

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The Planning Commission (Commission) has received and reviewed the proposed Negative Declaration pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and of Napa County's Local Procedures for Implementing CEQA, and finds that:

1. The Planning Commission has read and considered the Negative Declaration prior to taking action on said Negative Declaration and the proposed project.
2. The Negative Declaration is based on independent judgment exercised by the Planning Commission.
3. The Negative Declaration was prepared and considered in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
4. The Secretary of the Commission is the custodian of the records of the proceedings on which this decision is based. The records are located at the Napa County Planning, Building, and Environmental Services Department, 1195 Third Street, Room 210, Napa, California.
5. There is no substantial evidence in the record as a whole, that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
6. There is no evidence, in considering the record as a whole that the proposed project will have a potential adverse effect on wildlife resources or habitat upon which the wildlife depends.
7. The project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

USE PERMIT MODIFICATION REQUIRED FINDINGS:

The Commission has reviewed the use permit request in accordance with the requirements of the Napa County Code Section 18.124.070 and makes the following findings. That:

8. The Commission has the power to issue a use permit under the zoning regulations in effect as applied to the property.

Analysis: The project is consistent with AW (Agricultural Watershed) zoning district regulations. A winery (as defined in Napa County Code Section 18.08.640) and uses in connection with a winery (see Napa County Code Section 18.20.030) are permitted in an AW zoned district with an approved use permit. The project complies with the

requirements of the Winery Definition Ordinance (Ord. No. 947, 1990) and the remainder of the Napa County Zoning Ordinance (Title 18, Napa County Code) as applicable.

9. The procedural requirements for a use permit set forth in Chapter 18.124 of the Napa County Code (Use Permits) have been met.

Analysis: The use permit modification application has been filed, noticed and public hearing requirements have been met. The hearing notice was posted on December 27, 2017 and copies were forwarded to property owners within 1000 feet of the subject parcel and all other interested parties. The CEQA public comment period ran from December 27, 2017 to January 16, 2018.

10. The granting of the use permit, as conditioned, will not adversely affect the public health, safety or welfare of the County of Napa.

Analysis: Various County departments have reviewed the project and commented regarding water, waste water disposal, traffic and access, and fire protection. Conditions are recommended which will incorporate these comments into the project to assure the ongoing protection of the public health, safety and welfare.

11. The proposed use complies with applicable provisions of the Napa County Code and is consistent with the policies and standards of the Napa County General Plan.

Analysis: The proposed use complies with applicable provisions of the Napa County Code and is consistent with the policies and standards of the Napa County General Plan. The Winery Definition Ordinance (WDO) was established to protect agriculture and open space and to regulate winery development and expansion in a manner that avoids potential negative environmental effects. The project complies with the requirements of the Winery Definition Ordinance (Ord. No. 947, 1990) and the applicable provisions of the Napa County Zoning Ordinance (Title 18, Napa County Code).

This proposal is consistent with the *Napa County General Plan 2008*. The subject parcel is located on land designated Agriculture, Watershed and Open Space (AWOS) on the County's adopted General Plan Land Use Map. This project is comprised of an agricultural processing facility (winery), along with wine storage, bottling, and other WDO-compliant accessory uses as outlined in and limited by the approved project scope. (See Recommended Attachment "B" Conditions of Approval.) These uses fall within the County's definition of agriculture and thereby preserve the use of agriculturally designated land for current and future agricultural purposes.

General Plan Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Goal AG/LU-1 guides the County to "preserve existing agricultural land uses and plan for agriculture and related activities as the primary land uses in Napa County." General Plan Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Goal AG/LU-3 states the County should, "support the economic viability of agriculture, including grape growing, winemaking, other types of agriculture, and supporting industries to ensure the preservation of agricultural lands."

As approved here, the use of the property for the "fermenting and processing of grape juice into wine" (NCC Section 18.08.640) supports the economic viability of agriculture within the county consistent with General Plan Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Policy AG/LU-4 ("The County will reserve agricultural lands for agricultural use including

lands used for grazing and watershed/ open space...”). Policy AG/LU-8 also states, “The County’s minimum agricultural parcel sizes shall ensure that agricultural areas can be maintained as economic units and General Plan Economic Development Policy E-1 (The County’s economic development will focus on ensuring the continued viability of agriculture...). Approval of this project furthers these key goals.

Agricultural Policy AG/LU-13 of the County General Plan recognizes wineries, and any use clearly accessory to a winery, as agriculture. The Land Use Standards of the General Plan Policy AG/LU-21 list the processing of agricultural products as one of the general uses recognized by the Agricultural Resource and AWOS land use designations. The proposed project allows for the continuation of agriculture as a dominant land use within the county and is consistent with General Plan Policy AG/LU-13.

The project is also consistent with General Plan Conservation Policy CON-53 and CON-55, which require that applicants, who are seeking discretionary land use approvals, prove the availability of adequate water supplies, which can be appropriated without significant negative impacts on shared groundwater resources. As analyzed below, the proposed winery will not interfere substantially with groundwater recharge based on the criteria established by Napa County Public Works Department.

Finally, the “Right to Farm” is recognized throughout the General Plan and is specifically called out in Policy AG/LU-15 and in the County Code. “Right to Farm” provisions ensure that agriculture remains the primary land use in Napa County and is not threatened by potentially competing uses or neighbor complaints. Napa County’s adopted General Plan reinforces the County’s long-standing commitment to agricultural preservation, urban centered growth, and resource conservation. On balance, this project is consistent with the General Plan’s overall policy framework and with the Plan’s specific goals and policies.

12. The proposed use would not require a new water system or improvements causing significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on the affected groundwater basin in Napa County, unless that use would satisfy any of the other criteria specified for approval or waiver of a groundwater permit under Napa County Code Section 13.15.070 or Section 13.15.080.

Analysis: The subject property is not located in a “groundwater deficient area” as identified in Section 13.15.010 of the Napa County Code. Minimum thresholds for water use have been established by the Department of Public Works using reports by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). These reports are the result of water resources investigations performed by the USGS in cooperation with the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Any project which reduces water usage or any water usage which is at or below the established threshold is, for purposes of the application of the County’s Groundwater Conservation Ordinance, assumed not to have a significant effect on groundwater levels. The project is located on a ±99.6 acre parcel in a “hillside zone”. A Water Availability Analysis (WAA) was prepared for the project (O’Connor Environmental, Inc, February 27, 2017) and submitted with the application. The study included a Tier 1 analysis detailing the existing and proposed groundwater demands. Since the project is located in an area designated “hillside”, a Tier 2 water analysis was also prepared to analyze any well or spring interference and the aquifer recharge. The analysis indicates that the existing total water demand is 17.8 af/yr (winery processing = 1.03 af/yr; residences (2) = 3.03; employees (10) = 0.108; visitors (1,095/yr) = 0.010 af/yr;

event visitors (1,500/yr) =.069; domestic landscaping =1.05 af/yr; ±25 ac vineyards = 12.50 af/yr). The analysis concluded that the projected water demand for the project is 18.01 af/yr (winery processing =1.03 af/yr; residences (2) = 3.03; employees (16), 4 part-time = .168; visitors (14,600/yr) = 0.134 af/yr; event visitors (2,100/yr) =.097; domestic landscaping =1.05 af/yr; ±25 ac vineyards = 12.50 af/yr. As a result of the foregoing, annual water demand for this parcel would increase 0.2 af/yr, from 17.8 af/yr to 18.01 af/yr.

The report utilized a Soil Water Balance model to estimate groundwater available for aquifer recharge in the project area. The report revealed that average year recharge was 4.0 inches/year or 103.3 af/yr. The total water use for the project is estimated to be 18.01 af/yr, which represents 17% of the mean annual recharge, indicating that the project is unlikely to result in declines in groundwater elevations or depletion of groundwater resources over time. The closest neighboring well to the two existing wells on the project parcel appear to be located ±1,275 feet northeast of the upper well on the adjacent parcel to the north. Based on the WAA guidance document, a Tier 2 well interference analysis is not required given that non-project wells are located greater than 500 feet from the project wells. Since the closest neighboring well to the project wells is located more than 500 feet from the project wells, it is presumed that significant well interference is unlikely to occur per County guidance. The analysis also included a spring interference evaluation and the engineer concluded that the ornamental/landscape pond on the parcel is in a topographical position that could be consistent with a spring source. The potential spring on the parcel is not used for domestic or agricultural purposes and the Tier 2 spring interference criterion is presumptively as the no natural springs for use for domestic or agricultural purposes is located within 1,500 feet of the project wells.

Thus, the proposed Use Permit Major Modification is consistent with General Plan Goals CON-10 and CON-11, as well as the policies mentioned above that support preservation and sustainable use of groundwater for agricultural and related purposes. The water availability analysis (WAA) calculations demonstrated that the project will not have a significant impact on groundwater supply and recharge rates. The project will not require a new water system or other improvements and will not have an impact on local groundwater.